

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 211030
ORIGIN EA-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

66011

DRAFTED BY EA:WCHAMBERLIN

APPROVED BY EA:WCHAMBERLIN

-----054298 190616Z /11

R 182228Z AUG 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 1077

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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FOL RPT MANILA 14214 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK
JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR SINGAPORE AUG 16, 1978

QUOTE: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANILA 14214

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, ASEAN, RP

SUBJECT: ASEAN MINISTERIAL: PRELIMINARY GOP REACTION

SUMMARY: DEPUTY TRADE MINISTER VALDEPENAS, AMONG FIRST
OF PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS ATTENDING US-ASEAN MINISTERIAL
TO RETURN TO MANILA, CONSIDERS WASHINGTON MEETINGS "VERY
PRODUCTIVE." VALDEPENAS BELIEVES A TRUE MEASURE OF THE
SUCCESS OF THE MEETING MUST AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE
U.S. ECONOMIC MISSIONS SCHEDULED FOR LATER THIS YEAR
AND THE ARTICULATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AID PROJECTS
WHICH WERE DISCUSSED.

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1. DEPUTY TRADE MINISTER VICENTE VALDEPENAS TOLD EMBASSY
OFFICER THAT HE CONSIDERS ASEAN MINISTERIAL "85 TO 95
PERCENT SUCCESSFUL" AND A "BREAKTHROUGH" IN US-ASEAN
RELATIONS. VALDEPENAS BELIEVES TIMING OF MEETING WAS
UNFORTUNATE IN THAT USG ECONOMIC OFFICIALS, AND THE
GENERAL PUBLIC, ARE CURRENTLY PREOCCUPIED BY DOMESTIC

ISSUES, PRIMARILY INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. THUS,
UNITED STATES WAS NOT RPT IN MOOD PSYCOLOGICALLY TO GIVE
ASEAN TIES FULL ATTENTION.

2. VALDEPENAS COMMENTED THAT U.S. PREOCCUPATION WITH
INTERNAL AFFAIRS WAS PROBABLY UNAVOIDABLE AND THAT ASEAN
LEADERS HAD MUCH APPRECIATED ACCESS TO PRES. CARTER,
VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AS WELL AS SECRETARIES OF STATE,
TREASURY AND OTHER DEPARTMENT HEADS. ASEAN NATIONS ALSO
UNDERSTAND, HE SAID, THAT U.S. WISHES TO SUPPORT THE
ORGANIZATION WITHOUT REKINDLING SUPER-POWER RIVALRIES IN
EAST ASIA.

3. VALDEPENAS BELIEVES MOST IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
MINISTERIAL WERE 1) CANDID EXCHANGES WHICH TOOK PLACE
BETWEEN HIGH OFFICIALS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION
WHICH WERE THEREBY OPENED AND 2) U.S. COMMITMENT IN
PRINCIPAL TO THE COMMON FUND, AN AREA WHERE ASEAN CAN
PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE (REPORTED SEPTTEL)- HE WAS ALSO
PLEASED WITH PROGRESS MADE ON TRADE ISSUES: A
BREAKTHROUGH WAS ACHIEVED IN US/RP BILATERAL TALKS
(REPORTED SEPTTEL) AND THE US PROMISED TO LOOK INTO METHODS
OF EXTENDING GSP COVERAGE.

4. VALDEPENAS' REMARKS WERE GENERALLY UPBEAT AND HE
CONCLUDED THAT MINISTERIAL WAS "VERY PRODUCTIVE"
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TRUE MEASURE OF SUCCESS, HOWEVER, WILL BE IN FOLLOW-UP
BY VARIOUS U.S. MISSIONS WHICH WILL VISIT ASEAN AND IN
ARTICULATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. THE MINISTERIAL
WAS A SNOWBALL, HE SAID, WHICH WE HOPE IS NOW ROLLING
DOWN HILL. MURPHY
UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE211030
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WCHAMBERLIN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780339-0799
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780846/aaaabmns.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8e49e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1688981
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASEAN MINISTERIAL: PRELIMINARY GOP REACTION SUMMARY: DEPUTY TRADE MINISTER VALDEPENAS, AMONG FIRST OF PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS ATTENDING US-ASEAN MINISTE
TAGS: ETRD, PEPR, RP, US, XC, ASEAN
To: CINCPAC TOKYO MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8e49e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014